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students have need of a section cutter. This razor has two advantages over most safety razors, so far as our present purposes are concerned. In the first place, it is much like an old-style razor in general shape, the

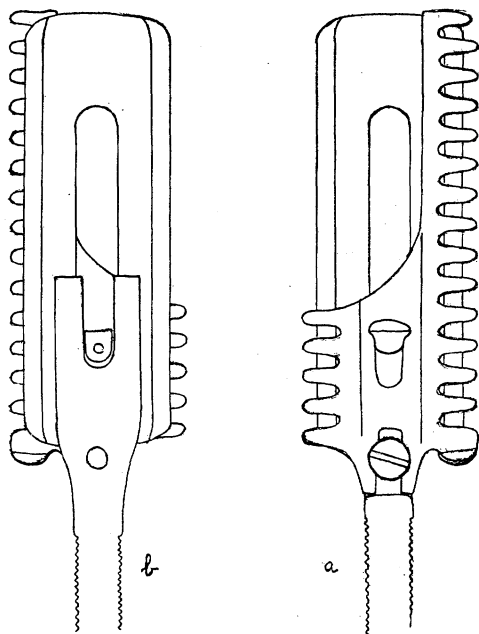


FIG. 1.—Modified safety razor: explained in text

blade, however, being removable and protected by a nickel-plated brass guard. In the second place, the blades are thicker, longer, and stiffer than those provided with most safety razors.

The accompanying drawings (fig. 1) will show at a glance the changes that have been made upon the "Durham-Demonstrator." As shown by *a*, the protecting shield has been cut away so as to leave a portion of the blade exposed for use. The other drawing (*b*), showing the other side of the razor, illustrates the

cutting off of the brass supporting handle, thus leaving the blade free beneath. A screw fitted into the handle at the base of the blade is at once the means of holding the latter rigid, as well as of permitting its easy removal for cleaning or changing the cutting edge, the slot filed into the base of the guard making of this a very simple operation.

In practice this razor has proved very successful with large classes, providing an abundance of sharp edges as well as saving the time of an assistant on whom the work of honing would otherwise fall.—J. P. GIVLER, *Southwestern College, Winfield, Kansas*.

## ON STEMONITIS NIGRESCENS AND RELATED FORMS

That MACBRIDE, in his *North American slime-moulds*, retains *Stemonitis nigrescens* Rex as a distinct and well marked species, while the LISTERS, in their *Monograph of the Mycetozoa*, refer it unhesitatingly

and with only the briefest comment to *S. fusca*, seems to warrant some further elucidation. Judging by the type specimen only, a portion of which was sent to me some years ago by the late Dr. REX, one would be justified in according to his species at least varietal rank. The strikingly dark color, the stiff, upright habit of the sporangia, not curved or drooping even at the edges of the clusters, and their small size (stalk less than 1 mm., total height 4.5 mm. or less) are features which appear to render this form recognizable at sight. Moreover, many gatherings made during the past ten years in as widely separated localities as New England and Colorado show that this dark, dwarf form is fairly common in the United States. It should be noted also that with the distinct external features noted above certain microscopic features are usually associated, such as a more or less imperfect development of the surface net, the meshes of which show spinelike processes, and reticulated spores of a smoky-brown color.

A number of gatherings made in Colorado, however, throw light on the variable character of *S. nigrescens*. Seven such gatherings are before me. They all agree in the short-stalked, upright, dwarf habit, and in the reticulated spores. But the color of the clusters of sporangia varies markedly from dull ferruginous to almost black; the surface net in one of the specimens is as perfectly developed and as free from spinous processes as in any typical specimen of *S. fusca*; while the spores vary in color from pale to dark smoky-brown, the former showing a very faint and delicate reticulation which is much more pronounced in the case of the darker-spored specimens. I cannot but conclude that these are all forms of one and the same species, and that they should be regarded as a dwarf variety of *Stemonitis fusca* Roth.

This opinion is strengthened by the examination of a specimen collected at Pagosa Springs, Colorado, in August 1911. It shows the same dense clusters of stiff, upright, dark smoky-brown sporangia, short-stalked, and measuring less than 4 mm. in height. The small-meshed surface net shows a few small spines. The spores,  $8.9\mu$  in diameter, are rather dark in color, but instead of being reticulated they are closely and minutely spinulose. In my opinion this is a dwarf form of *Stemonitis herbatica* Peck, and bears the same relationship precisely to that species as do the dwarf forms commented on above to *S. fusca*. I conclude, therefore, that the LISTERS were correct in merging *S. nigrescens* Rex with *S. fusca* Roth, but that the former constitutes a well marked variety, though ill-defined by the designation *nigrescens*.—W. C. STURGIS, *Colorado Springs, Colorado*.